



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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*HISTORIC PRESERVATION*

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**STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
**STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 64 Medford Street

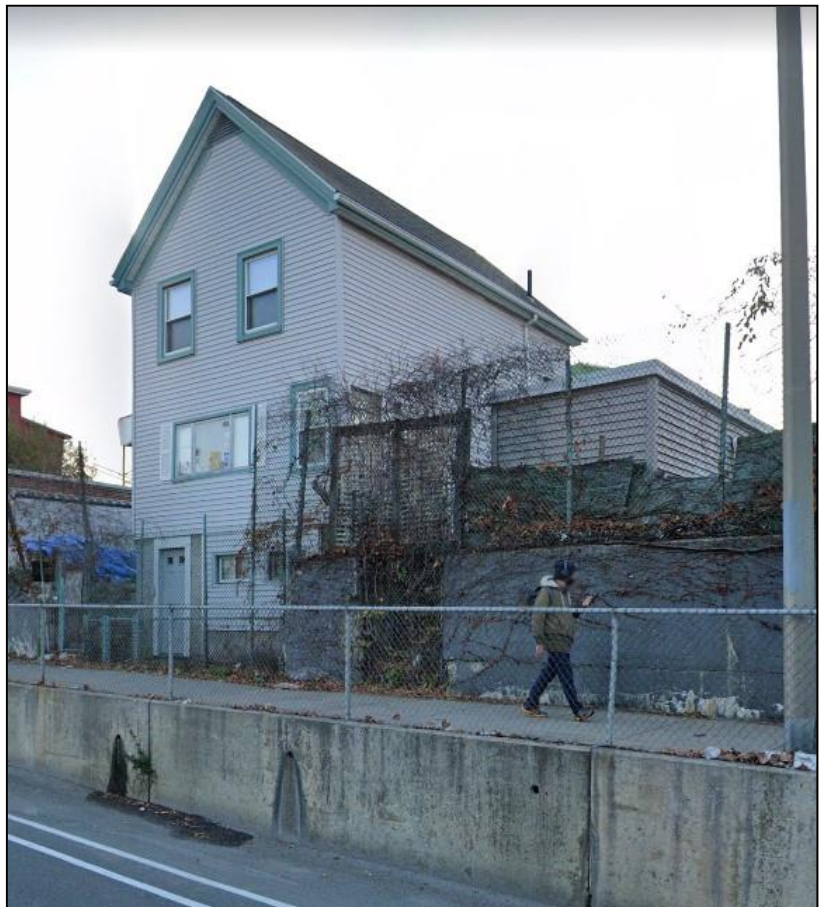
**Case:** HPC.DMO 2021.11

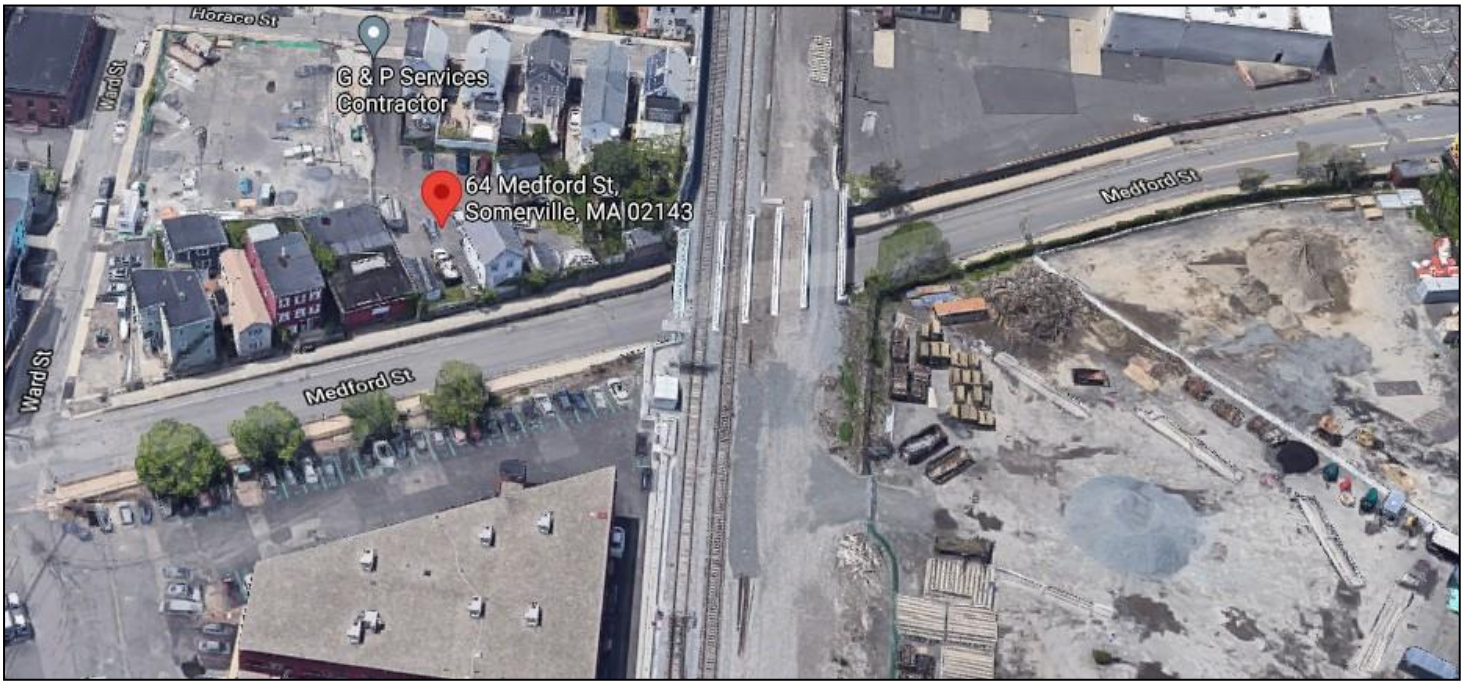
**Applicant:** P & P Realty Trust

**Owner:** same as applicant

**Proposal:** *Demolish principal structure.*

**HPC Meeting Date:** April 26, 2021





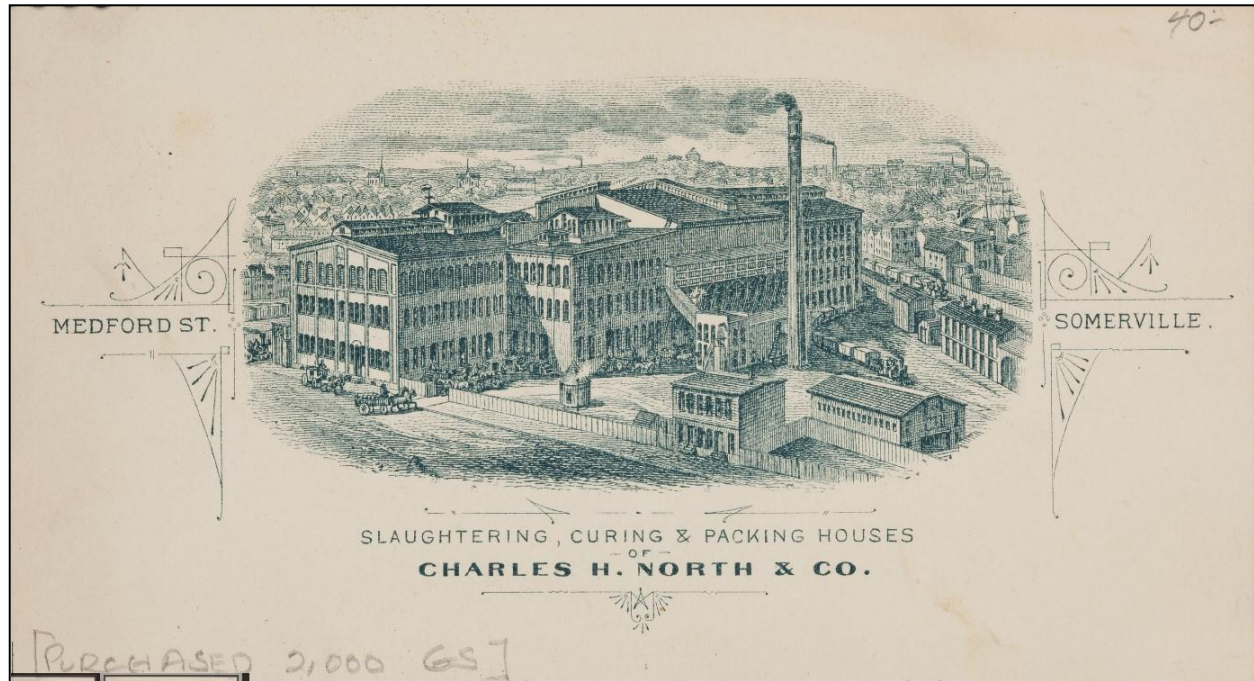
## I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

**Historical Context:** 64 Medford Street is located on a block bounded by Ward Street to the left, Horace Street to the rear, and active railroad tracks to the right. Medford Street was constructed in 1813 and was colloquially known as the “Road to Craigie Bridge” for it connected directly to Craigie Bridge built in 1803. Though that original bridge structure has been long lost to time, the current bridge in its place is known today as the Charles River Dam Bridge.

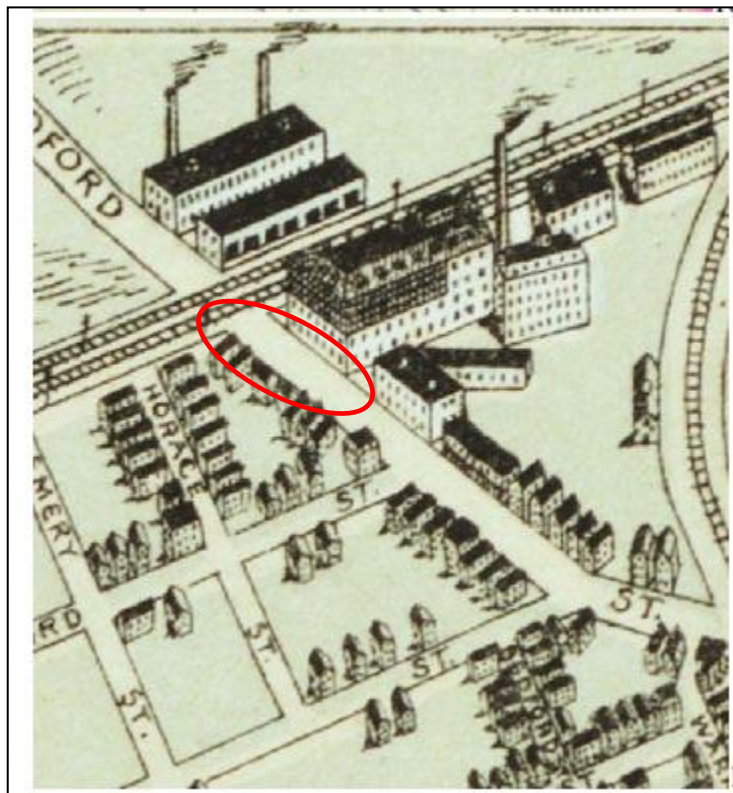
The neighborhood on this east side of Medford Street has long been home to the various components of the meat packing industry. Meat packing plants and their associated slaughterhouses, storage pens, processing and packing stations were established in this area due to the proximity of the Fitchburg Railroad line. The rail lines brought animals in from the West and shipped out the meat products to consumers around the country. Within a short walk of this neighborhood were the Charles H. North Meat Packing Plant, the Squires Meat Packing Plant, the New England Dressed Meat and Wool, the Boynton Meat Packing Company and numerous smaller enterprises engaged in the same business. Other industries such as glass and furniture making were also successfully established in the immediate area as well as in nearby East Cambridge. Much of the Charles North Meatpacking remains (under a different use) on Medford Street today.







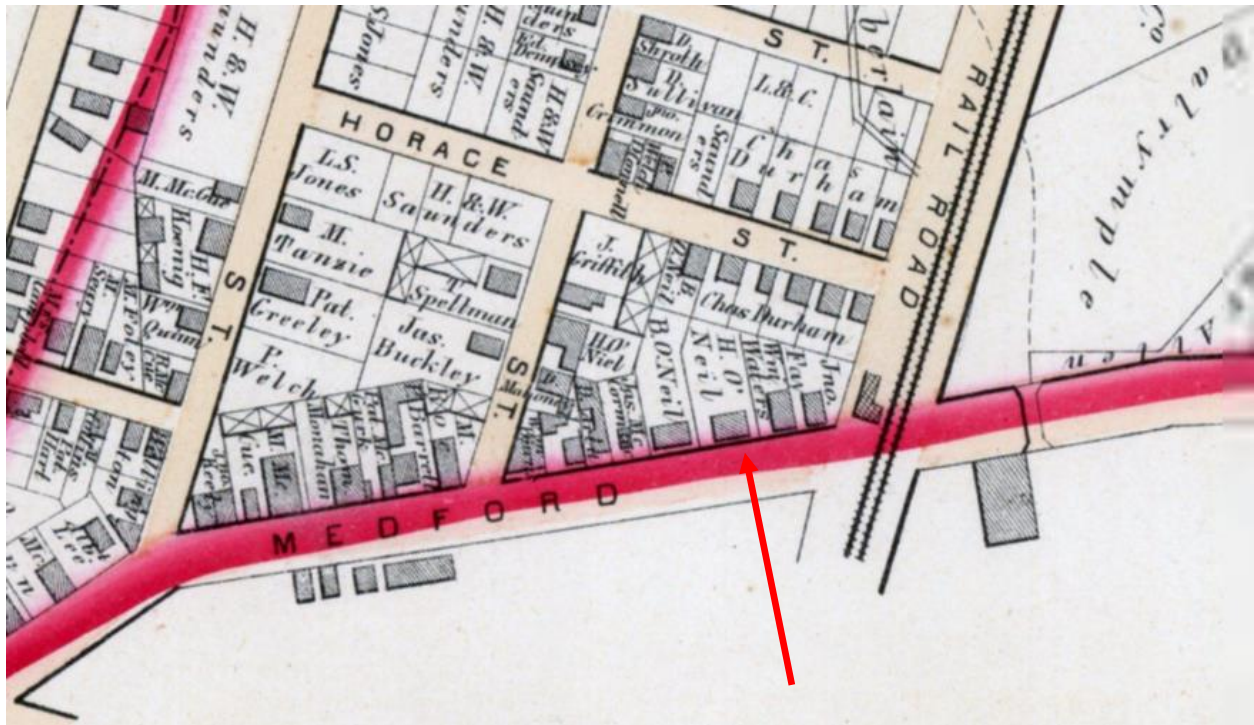
The image below shows an 1877 drawing of the meat packing plants across Medford Street. Though it is unclear when exactly 64 Medford Street was built, given its shape, massing, and design, it was undoubtedly a direct witness to the workings of the industries on the opposite side of the street. It is highly likely that residents of 64 Medford at one time worked in one of the area industries. Though the area of 64 Medford has been circled, it is unclear which of the houses it is, if it had been built by that time.



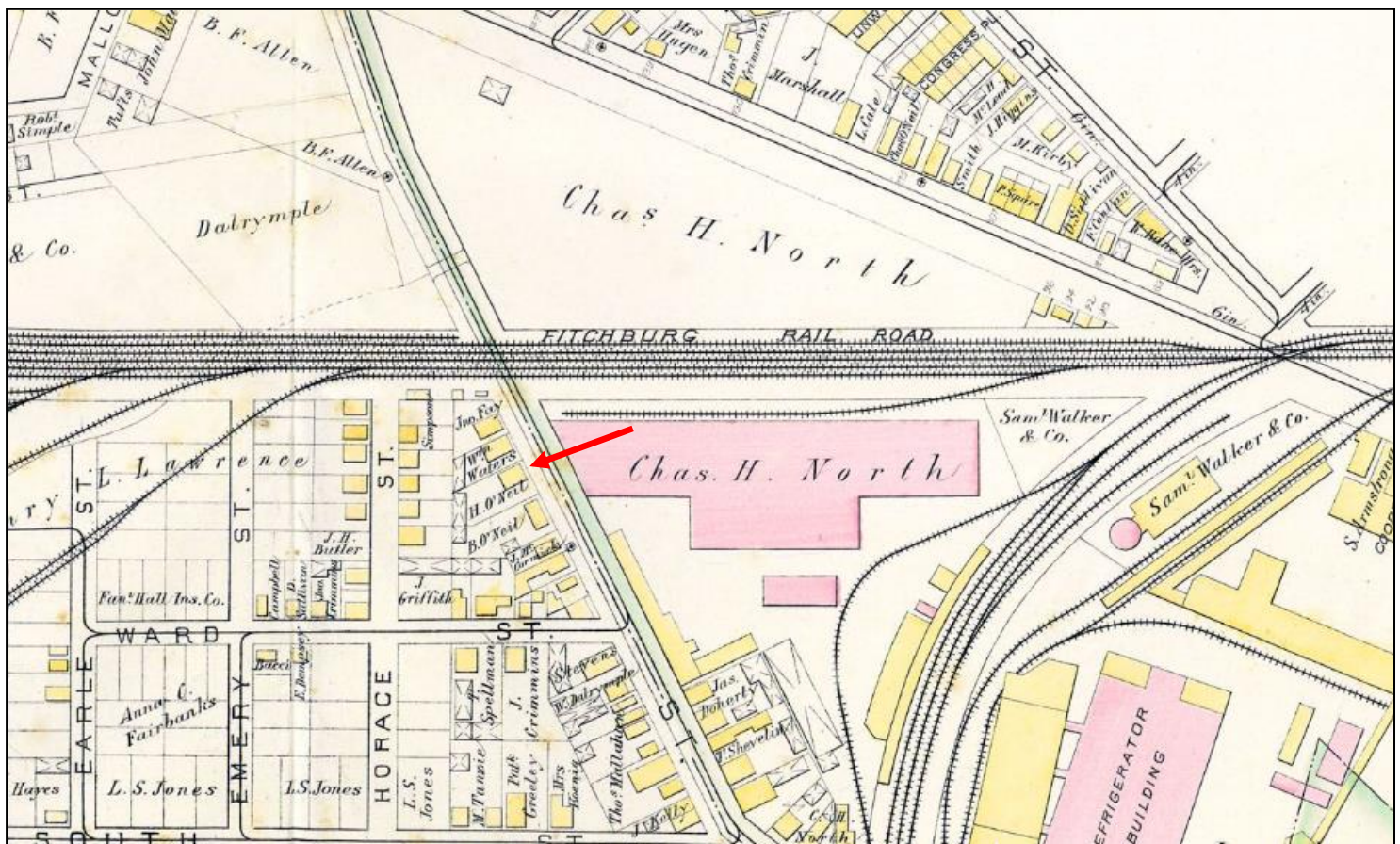
The slaughterhouses gave the area a particular character that made it undesirable except for only the poorest and most recent immigrants. The Millers River, which ran through this area, for decades became the repository of animal waste, carcasses and other refuse from the meatpacking industry. So putrid was the air from the polluted river, that in 1874, steps began to be taken by local officials to fill in the river.

The 1874 Hopkins plate F below shows the structures extant at the time. The property owned by H. O'Neil is the site of today's 64 Medford Street. However, it is possible that the structure on the property shown on this map is a different structure due to its shape and orientation to the street.





The 1884 Hopkins Plate 007 shows that the lot owned by H. O'Neil either has a new structure built upon it or the structure seen on the 1874 map has been re-oriented. It is likely that this is the current 64 Medford structure.





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## II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Please see the section immediately below which discusses location, design, materials and any alterations as the same information would be written here, just in longer form.

*The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.*

The period of relevance for the house begins c.1874-1884

- a. Location: It is believed that the structure is in its original location.
- b. Design: 2 ½-story gable-fronted Italiante. House is two bays wide and two bays deep, though the distance between the bays is greater at the length than width. Steep front-facing gable with deep eave.

- c. Materials: Wood framed; vinyl siding; cement foundation, possibly cement-parged brick; replacement windows, asphalt roofing shingles
- d. Alterations: house has been elevated(foundation), original door opening removed, loss of original windows, door hood, window under gable removed; windows re-oriented across façade; entry door created at basement level along with modern windows/openings; chimney stack removed.

Evaluation of Integrity: Though the gable-fronted worker's cottage form is still evident, the building has been heavily altered (see above).

### **III. FINDINGS**

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) **importantly associated with people, events or history** and/or (b) **historically or architecturally significant**. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) must make these findings. The portions of the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO) related to these findings are included below:*

#### **A. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

*Importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the structure at 64 Medford Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the structure at 64 Medford Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding a".

#### **B. HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

*The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.*

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the structure at 64 Medford Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the structure at 64 Medford Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding "b".

#### **IV. VOTE**

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the structure at 64 Medford Street is or is not “historically significant”.